

Message Text

SECRET

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62

ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-02 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PRS-01 ACDA-05 DODE-00 /053 W

----- 076908

R 241900Z MAR 75

FM USMISSION USBERLIN

TO AMEMBASSY BONN

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 694

AMEMBASSY BERLIN UNN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

CINCEUR

CINCUSAFE

CINCUSAREUR

USELMLO SHAPE

S E C R E T USBERLIN 587

CINCEUR FOR POLAD AND OPS

CINCUSAFE FOR POLAD AND OPS

CINCUSAREUR FOR POLAD, OPS, AEAGC-COC AND AEAAG-AP

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN, PFOR, PGOV, WB, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIETS PROTEST CAMERA DROPPED FROM US AIRCRAFT

REF: USBERLIN 436 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: SOVIETS PROTESTED IN BASC MARCH 6
DROPPED CAMERAINCIDENT. WE TRANSMIT BELOW SUGGESTED
RESPONSE. END SUMMARY.

2. SOVIET CHIEF CONTROLLER READ TO US CHIEF CONTROLLER
IN BASC MARCH 24 FOLLOWING STATEMENT (SOVIET TRANSLATION)
PROTESTING INCIDENT REPORTED REFTEL.

BEGIN TEXT- I AM AUTHORIZED BY THE COMMANDER OF THE SOVIET
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TROOPS IN GERMANY TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING PROTEST:

ON THE 6TH OF MARCH, 1975 ACCORDING TO THE SCHEDULED REQUEST, THE US U-6A(L-20) PLANE WAS PERFORMING ITS FLIGHT FROM 10:45 TILL 17:18 LOCAL TIME. DURING ITS FLIGHT THE PLANE MADE A FEW TURNS OVER THE SOVIET MILITARY UNIT LOCATION WHILE PHOTOGRAPHING IT. IN ONE OF THOSE TURNS THE PLANE LOST THE CAMERA USED AND AFTER THE CAMERA FILM HAD BEEN DEVELOPED THE FRAMES DISPLAYED THE TECHNICAL AREA OF THE UNIT LOCATION WITH COMBAT EQUIPMENT ON IT.

THE SOVIET COMMAND CONSIDERS THE USE OF THE BERLIN CONTROL ZONE BY THE US PLANE FOR RECONNAISSANCE PURPOSES DIRECTED AGAINST THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES AS THE VIOLATION OF THE OCTOBER 22, 1946 AGREEMENT.

IN THIS CONNECTION THE SOVIET COMMAND MAKES A RESOLUTE PROTEST AGAINST IT AND DEMANDS THAT THE INCIDENT SHOULD BE THOROUGHLY INVESTIGATED, PERSONS INVOLVED BE PUNISHED AND ALL MEASURES BE TAKEN TO EXCLUDE IN THE FUTURE THE FLIGHTS IN THE BCZ AND AIR CORRIDORS FOR RECONNAISSANCE PURPOSES AGAINST THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES. END TEXT.

3. SOVIET CHIEF CONTROLLER SUBSEQUENTLY PASSED RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEXTS TO US CHIEF CONTROLLER WHO PROMISED TO REPORT COMMUNICATION TO AUTHORITIES BUT OTHERWISE OFFERED NO COMMENT. BRITISH AND FRENCH CHIEF CONTROLLERS WERE PRESENT ON OUR REQUEST, BUT SOVIETS SPECIFICALLY DIRECTED APPROACH TO US.

4. OCTOBER 22, 1946 AGREEMENT TO WHICH SOVIETS REFER IS DAIR/P(45)71, BASIC REGULATIONS GOVERNING FLIGHTS IN AIR CORRIDORS AND BERLIN CONTROL ZONE. IT CONTAINS NO LIMITATION ON RECONNAISSANCE OR PHOTOGRAPHY, MERELY SAFETY PROCEDURES WITH WHICH FLIGHTS MUST COMPLY. ONLY PART OF AGREEMENT WHICH FLIGHT IN QUESTION VIOLATED, AND THAT UNINTENTIONALLY, WAS PARAGRAPH 18, WHICH PROVIDES "THE PERSON IN COMMAND OF AN AIRCRAFT SHALL NOT PERMIT ANYTHING TO BE DROPPED FROM THE AIRCRAFT IN FLIGHT WHICH MIGHT CREATE HAZARD TO PERSON OR PROPERTY ON THE GROUND OR WATER." SOVIETS HAVE, OF COURSE, TRADITIONALLY REFUSED
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TO GUARANTEE SAFETY OF LOCAL FLIGHT (ONE ENTIRELY WITHIN BCZ) WHICH WAS NOT RESTRICTED TO WESTERN SECTORS OF BERLIN, AND THEY SO STAMPED CARD OF FLIGHT IN QUESTION. PARAGRAPH 3(C) OF AGREEMENT MERELY STATES, HOWEVER, THAT "IT IS DESIRABLE THAT, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, LOCAL FLIGHTS (TESTING, TRAINING, ETC) BE EXECUTED ABOVE THE NATIONAL SECTORS. HOWEVER, IF NECESSARY, THEY MAY BE EXECUTED ABOVE THE REMAINDER OF THE CONTROL ZONE, SUBJECT TO NORMAL CLEARANCE

BY THE BERLIN AIR SAFETY CENTER."

5. WHILE CAMERA PROBABLY WAS SMASHED ON IMPACT, FILM CASSETTE MAY HAVE SURVIVED FALL, AND WE HAVE NO REASON TO DOUBT THAT SOVIETS HAVE IN FACT RECOVERED FILM WITH EXPOSURES INDICATING THAT FLIGHT WAS PHOTOGRAPHING SOVIET MILITARY INSTALLATION IN GDR. THIS ACTIVITY CAN HARDLY HAVE COME AS REVELATION TO SOVIETS. IT IS INTERESTING THAT PROTEST CAME THROUGH BASC AND HAS NOT YET BEEN SUPPORTED IN SOVIET EMBASSY CHANNELS. WE ARE INCLINED TO FOLLOW NONPROVOCATIVE ORAL REPLY (TEXT WOULD BE LEFT FOR CONVENIENCE), WHICH, WHILE NOT ACKNOWLEDGING OPERATIONAL LIMITATION ON LOCAL FLIGHTS, WOULD ALLOW SOVIETS AT LEAST SOME AMBIGUITY IN INTERPRETING WHETHER WE WERE APOLOGIZING FOR ACTIVITY (OR AT LEAST CLUMSINESS AT BEING CAUGHT OUT) OR MERELY FOR INADVERTENT VIOLATION OF PARAGRAPH 18. (WE ARE FILLING BRITISH AND FRENCH IN ON BACKGROUND OF PROTEST AND SUGGESTING THAT THEIR CHIEF CONTROLLERS BE PRESENT TO LEND INFORMAL SUPPORT WHEN US CHIEF CONTROLLER MAKES RESPONSE.)

BEGIN TEXT- THE UNITED STATES AUTHORITIES HAVE LOOKED INTO THE MATTER RAISED IN YOUR STATEMENT OF MARCH 24, 1975 AND HAVE AUTHORIZED ME TO RESPOND AS FOLLOWS. THE FLIGHT OF THE UNITED STATES AIRCRAFT ON MARCH 6, 1975 TO WHICH YOU REFER WAS CARRIED OUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH A PROPERLY FILED FLIGHT PLAN AND PURSUANT TO THE PROCEDURES SET FORTH IN DAIR/P(45)71 OF OCTOBER 22, 1946. WE WILL CONTINUE TO FLY SUCH LOCAL FLIGHTS IN THE BERLIN CONTROL ZONE BUT WILL OF COURSE EXERCISE EVERY CAUTION TO ENSURE THAT THERE ARE NO OCCURRENCES CONTRARY TO ANY PROVISION OF THE AGREED PROCEDURES. END TEXT.

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7. USCOB CONCURS. GEORGE

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Executive Order: GS
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Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
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